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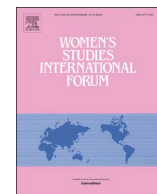
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Saving and reproducing the nation: Struggles around right-wing politics of social reproduction, gender and race in austerity Europe

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A B S T R A C T

This article suggests the analytic lens of cultural, social and national reproduction to understand the centrality of gendered and ethnic relations, in particular a focus on family life in contemporary UK. Proposing a theoretical focus on reproduction, the article then provides some contextualisation with wider European experiences to show connections between the political articulations across the far-right and mainstream right-wing. It argues that there is much overlap between the far-right and mainstream rightwing, conservative gender and family ideologies, where contradictory aspects of their gender and family ideals (simultaneously progressive and traditional) are articulated as care for the nation's future. Care is then articulated for the purpose of racist activism and constructing governmental belonging. The racialized migrant family plays a central role in these debates, marking the boundaries of the nation. The article explores these issues in depth through the example of material and symbolic constructions of the racialized migrant family as undeserving of care, exemplified through the UK policy of No Recourse to Public Funding.

Introduction

Current far-right and populist right-wing cultural rhetoric in Europe cohere around the imagination of a beleaguered continent, under threat from multiculturalism and overbearing feminism. While organizationally distinct, there is also much overlap and cross-over between far-right, populist rightwing and conservative discourses on gender, race and migration. Feminism and multiculturalism are presented as challenging the social order that makes the nation a 'homely' space. This discourse views white, hegemonic masculinities and femininities as under threat and presents right-wing activists as saviours of the nation. This article brings a new approach to current critical anti-racist feminist debates on these issues in particular with a focus on the UK. The article suggests that the analytic lens of reproduction offers a productive way of understanding these issues. It argues that a broad notion of cultural, social and national reproduction is helpful in understanding the centrality of gendered, racism and nation, in particular through a focus on the racialized migrant family. The analysis specifically looks at how the nation is reproduced through the control and management of the racialized migrant family by the nation state. After introducing the theoretical approach to reproduction, the article outlines the increasing influence of far right and populist right wing discourses on migration and gender on conservative and mainstream politics. It then moves to explore current policies within the UK which symbolically and

economically marginalize racialized migrant families. The article argues that despite differences in right-wing and populist politics, the UK context has focused on demonizing racialized migrant families. In particular, through policies that realize a 'hostile climate' to migration, such as the policy of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), migrant families have been experiencing increasing racist exclusions – often despite having been settled in the UK for many years. These racist exclusions have made the reproduction of their families extremely difficult. While migrants' paid work, whether in the formal or informal sector has been central to the reproduction of the nation through care work and services (such as cleaning, catering, restaurant and domestic work), these policies target migrants' ability to reproduce their own families with dignity. Exploring the reproduction of the nation through social, gendered, cultural and racist discourses and policies can help develop analysis and activism to strengthen anti-racist and feminist politics.

Theorizing reproducing the nation

Increasingly visible populist right and far right movements try to center white, heterosexual hegemonic masculinities and specific versions of femininities proclaimed to be 'traditional' as protecting the future of the nation. These groups cast themselves as saviours and protectors of a nation in danger of two evils: Firstly, they portray a

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danger of being outnumbered by immigrants and their uncontrolled fertility, which they fear may lead to an estrangement from 'their' cultural tradition. This would change the homely nation's cultural character and challenge its social and cultural cohesion. The second danger, according to these right-wing populists emanates from patronizing governmental and educational institutions, as they aim to 're-educate' the population into accepting particular versions of gender equality. This fear is stoked by the fantasy of overpowering feminist institutions. The populist right claims that these twin dangers need to be averted for the sake of creating a homely nation for themselves. However, time and intergenerational continuity play an important part in this argument. Thus, these right-wing discourses project a view of the homely nation into the past. This golden past of social and cultural cohesion around a unified national identity, they argue, was produced and held together by a traditional version of the family. These right-wing discourses claim particular urgency and legitimacy by furthermore imagining the future of the nation through the topic of family. Indeed, they view themselves as custodians for the future of the nation's legitimate, i.e. white, heterosexual, children. It is in this sense, that what is at stake in these populist right-wing struggles around gender, sexuality, migration and race is the reproduction of the nation through the generations.

There is a large and sustained body of feminist research on gender and nation, drawing out the historical significance of the practice of mothering, maternalist and natalist policies in different national and political contexts (e.g. Albanese, 2006), the significance of women's movements for developing citizenship struggles on the transnational level (Berkovitch, 1999) as well as nationally. Furthermore, authors have emphasised the links between empire, nation building and creating gender regimes, as well as sexual norms (e.g. Blom, Hagemann, & Hall, 2000; Mayer, 2000; McClintock, 1993). The relationship between gender, nation and politics has developed differentially depending on national and political contexts (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 2011; Mosse, 1985). While socially conservative forces have portrayed feminism as a Western, imperial imposition, Jayawerdana (2016) has shown the centrality of struggles for gender equality in the context of Third World nationalisms. While political and citizenship rights as well as policy analysis are important approaches to understand the relationship between gender and nation, we also know that cultural representations of the nation are saturated with gendered meanings and conversely ideas about proper gender performances are themselves part and parcel of struggles around national identities (Cussack, 2003). Building on this body of work, this article goes beyond this literature in explicitly developing the potential of the analytic notion of reproduction to the contemporary European moment of right-wing political hegemony, focusing on the UK.

Women play an important role in constructing national identities: on one hand as symbols of the nation, embodying its values, on the other, in their role as mothers, women transmit culture and values to the next generation, as well as biologically reproducing the group. Thus, mothers are seen as safeguarding group continuity (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1989, Yuval-Davis, 1997, 2011). At a moment, where culture is becoming a central marker of difference and justification for racialization, 'gendered bodies and sexuality play pivotal roles as territories, markers and reproducers of the narratives of nations' (Yuval-Davis, 1997:39). Yet, women are also social and political actors in their own right who may engage in particular projects of building communities and contesting dominant national projects. The nation is often imagined in familial metaphors, a representation that legitimizes inequalities within and between nations as natural since they were seen as stemming from naturalised gender and age differences (McClintock, 1993). In images of the nation, gender has long played a key differentiating role. Mosse (1985) suggests that those elements of the nation which were supposed to safeguard continuity and cultural longevity have been symbolised by female figures. Male symbols and figures, on the other hand, he suggests, have been used to represent the

modernising and progressive aspects of the nation. While this may not hold true for all gendered representations of the nation, it is important to note that gendered imaginations of the nation have been instrumental in reconciling contradictory aspects of the nation. The use of gendered representations has served to make contradictions such as continuity and change, adherence to tradition as well as embracing of modernity, equality and democracy more coherent in the imagination of the nation.

Thus, struggles around gender have been central to ideas and representations of the nation. One key aspect of this, on which this article is focusing, are struggles on the reproduction of the nation. Much of the work of social and cultural reproduction of the nation is undertaken by women, be it in the realm of the family or through educational institutions, women play an important role in reproducing the nation (Balibar, 1991). Reproduction thus includes both the daily and inter-generational.

processes involved in maintaining and reproducing people, specifically the labouring population (...) It involves the provision of food, clothing, shelter, basic safety, and health care, along with the development and transmission of knowledge, social values, and cultural practices and the construction of individual and collective identities (Bezanson & Luxton, 2006: 3).

This definition highlights the multiple aspects of reproduction and their interplay. The concept of reproduction are multifaceted, encompassing socio-structural aspects of the reproduction of the labour force, for example, as well as cultural and symbolic elements where women and the family are constructed as transmitters of a national identity, while other approaches highlight the agency involved in practices of reproduction. On one hand, reproduction often refers to the processes of conception, pregnancy, childbearing and the biological making of children. Indeed, biological and cultural reproduction are often conflated, when childbearing and rearing is named in one breath. Quite distinctly from this, in Marxist analyses, social reproduction refers to the reproduction of the class relations. Marx noted that the production process is continuous, and that every process of production is at the same time a process of reproduction. In that sense, the conditions of production create not only commodities and surplus-value, but they also produce and reproduces the exploitative capital-relation itself (Luxton, 2006:29). As Fraser (2016: 101) argues,

reproductive 'activity forms capitalism's human subjects, sustaining them as embodied natural beings, while also constituting them as social beings, forming their habitus and the cultural ethos in which they move. The work of birthing and socializing the young is central to this process, as is caring for the old, maintaining households, building communities and sustaining the shared meanings, affective dispositions and horizons of value that underpin social cooperation.'

This sense of the combined aspects of reproduction as an activity that reproduces humans as social and cultural beings while at the same time reproducing the cultural, social and economic structures, including inequalities, is helpful, I suggest, for understanding the positioning of racialized migrant families in contemporary Europe and the UK more specifically.

Bourdieu'sian accounts have added to these insights into cultural reproduction, chiefly through the processes of education and building formal and informal cultural capital. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) have argued that cultural capital is central to the reproduction of society, at once transmitting knowledge and cultural tools while also transmitting from generation to generation cultural, economic and social inequalities. Bourdieu's work has focused on the reproduction of classed inequalities, however it has also been usefully applied and developed to analyse and critique how cultural capital reflects and reinforces ethnic, racial and gender inequalities (Erel, 2010; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). In Bourdieu'sian accounts, both the family and the education system become key agents in transmitting cultural capital and – directly or indirectly – economic capital. For the purposes of this article, I will be focusing on the family rather than educational

institutions. The family acts as a main conduit of capital, including national privileges, between generations and therefore is a key element of reproduction strategies (Bourdieu, 1996; Turner, 2008). However, it is important to bear in mind that what and who counts as family cannot be taken for granted as this changes both within and across social formations. While some family forms are privileged before others, both in material and symbolic terms, people's ability to identify with the idealised family forms constitutes a privilege in itself,

'the privilege of being *comme il faut*, conforming to the norm and therefore enjoying a symbolic profit of normality. Those who have the privilege of having a normal family are able to demand the same of everyone without having to raise the question of the conditions (e.g. a certain income, living space, etc.) of universal access to what they demand universally' (Bourdieu, 1996: 23).

This becomes particularly pertinent when we look at the denigration of racialized migrant family forms in contemporary Europe, where it is often the family which is blamed for a supposed lack of integration and cultural capital of ethnic minority children (Kraler, 2010; Vacchelli, 2017). Increasingly, the onus for social and cultural reproduction is shifted from states to individuals. Reproductive activity takes place through states, markets, communities and families, historically taking different forms. In capitalist societies, there is a systemic contradiction between the (largely unpaid) reproductive labour needed to sustain capital accumulation on one hand and on the other hand, capitalism's drive towards capital accumulation undermines the possibilities of reproduction by increasing the marketization of reproduction and decreasing the time and other resources available for unpaid care work (Fraser, 2016:100).

While this inherent contradiction of capitalism and social reproduction is not new, it is articulated in a particularly dramatic crisis form in the neoliberal era. The shift to neoliberalism has decreased state support for reproduction and depleted community resources. Women's unpaid reproductive labour in the family has long served to buffer the effects of insufficient resources for reproduction, however the neoliberal intensification of the demands of paid work, leaving less time, money and other resources to families and communities, has severely impacted the capacity for reproduction, in particular of the poorest and most vulnerable households.

The systemic capitalist crisis of social reproduction is therefore currently sharpened and articulated in a double bind: while families and communities are increasingly made responsible for reproduction, their capacities to perform reproductive work have been undermined. As a result, social reproduction has been 'commodified for those who can pay for it and privatized for those who cannot' (Fraser, 2016:104).

When it comes to migrants, the family's ability and conditions to reproduce '*comme il faut*', that is, according to governmental norms of what counts as properly 'integrated' or capable of integration, is being policed through a shift to temporary residence statuses (Kofman, Raghuram, & Raghuram, 2015: 154). In particular those migrants who are categorised as less skilled are increasingly excluded or marginalized and their ability to reproduce their own families is being circumscribed despite the fact that they often play a key part in the social and cultural reproduction of the nations in which they live through their paid work in cleaning, care, domestic work, education and services such as catering and restaurants (Ibid.). These multiple aspects of the concept of reproduction make it useful as a lens for exploring right-wing populist movements' focus on gendered, sexual and ethnic inequalities, as endangering their sense of a homely nation.

Context: contemporary right-wing debates on gender, family and nation in post-crisis Europe

This section critically analyses the role that the politics of social and cultural reproduction play in contemporary European debates on racialized migrant family life. This does neither aim to provide an exhaustive account of these debates, nor a comparison between countries,

but rather this section aims at providing a context assembling the analytical tools for understanding how the racialized migrant family. Plays a key role in racist discourses on the national family and gender and migration. This lays the ground for my argument in the next section to show the impact of migration policies on migrant families and the racist inequalities of reproduction these create for migrant families.

Spierings et al. (2015:3) argue that populist right-wing parties have become the most successful new group of political parties in decades. An emphasis on traditional gender relations is a key element of populist right parties, however, it is not clear in how far this distinguishes new populist right-wing parties from socially conservative parties. Indeed, here my focus is on the common discursive constructions of the racialized migrant family across repertoires of far-right, populist right and mainstream conservative politics. One central argument of contemporary right-wing populist parties combines gender politics and anti-Muslim racism: A key argument to legitimise this racism is that 'Islamic values are at odds with liberal democratic values, such as the autonomy of the individual, democracy, emancipation of homosexuals and women, equality of men and women, freedom of expression, and separation of church and state' (Spierings et al., 2015: 8–9). However this argument is also increasingly central to mainstream political debates in Europe. While there is on one hand considerable variation in the ways discourses on gender are mobilized by far-right parties, there is also some overlap between the ways gender is constructed among socially conservative, far-right and everyday racist discourses (cf. Keskinen, 2013:225).

While populist right-wing parties emphasise the central role the supposed European achievement of gender equality plays in constituting a European cultural identity that legitimizes anti-Muslim racism, at the same time many of these populist right-wing groups actively question feminist achievements. Thus, activism around the phenomenon of 'antigenderism', mobilising far-right, socio-politically conservative and religious groups and ideas has gained momentum in several European countries. These movements, argue Kováts, Pöim, and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (2015): 11) 'want to claim that gender equality is an "ideology" (...) The main targets are the alleged "propaganda" for LGBTI rights, for reproductive rights and biotechnology, for sexual and equality education'. One example of this has been explored by Blum (2015) who shows in the German context, that while mainstream parties and small populist right-wing groups are not officially connected on an organizational level, there are strong interpersonal links. Analysing the similarities and differences between the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) - a conservative mainstream party - the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) a recent extreme right-wing party with neoliberal orientations and the long established fascist Nationale Partei Deutschlands (NPD) she finds that all three parties enshrine the heterosexual nuclear family as the building stone of society in their party programmes, while the AfD aims to 'promote families "more cohesively as a future investment and part of the generational contract"', the NPD sees the so-called 'traditional family' as essential for the 'perseverance of the German nation, rejecting same-sex partnerships altogether' (Blum, 2015:43). The NPD openly propagates eugenicist positions through racist and homophobic initiatives by its youth organisation such as a campaign in 2013 where they agitated for "Condoms for foreigners and selected Germans!". This campaign sought racial purity through promoting contraception for migrant families and rejecting gay adoption rights. Rather than teaching diversity in schools, they propose healthy nutrition classes for heterosexual white German families. This promotion of white heterosexual German families and control of migrant families' reproduction is intended to prevent 'national death' (Blum, 2015: 45–46).

While CDU and AfD as more mainstream parties officially support some aspects of gender equality, local-level and online collaborative initiatives, combining anti-Muslim, racist, homophobic, anti-genderism discourses are notable for bringing together different reactionary groups and mobilising them into action around the focus of traditional,

national gender and family roles (cf. Scott, 2013). As Andrea Pető notes, this ease of mobilising populist activism contrasts with the difficulties of mainstream politics to engage people (Pető, 2015: 126), suggesting that a Gramscian struggle for hegemony over the definition of European traditions is being played out. Exploring these movements as hegemonic struggles to establish a new right-wing common sense is useful for understanding often disparate and even contradictory elements of populist right-wing discourses and agendas on the nation, gender and the family. This struggle for hegemony, selectively draws on discursive strategies such as the emphasis on European, modern values supportive of more egalitarian gender roles when demarcating a supposed national or European identity from stereotypical constructions of 'Muslim' families. But this common sense is flexible and can at the same time emphasise the desirability of stable family relations for the supposedly ideal national family. Indeed, these contradictions are part and parcel of common sense, which is 'fragmentary, incoherent (...) not something rigid and immobile but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life' (Gramsci, 1971:326). The flexible and fragmentary character of common sense further works through ascribing particular, polarized, characteristics to specific ethnic groups. For example in the UK in the 1980s and 90s, the image of a supposed white British family norm was discursively stabilized by ascribing to Muslim and Asian families the characteristic of being 'too' traditional (e.g. through strong, close family relations across generations and nuclear families) while Caribbean families were pathologized as being too far removed from an assumed norm of a 'traditional' two parent family (Alexander, 2002; Phoenix & Woollett, 1991; Rattansi, 1992; Reynolds, 2005). In this case, the polarized ethnicised pathologization of different family forms was used to establish a common sense about a white British family norm, despite increasing empirical diversity of family lives. Such struggles around hegemonizing gendered identities are closely bound up with struggles around who has a right to manage the nation. As Keskinen (2013) argues, right-wing movements' rhetoric aims to challenge a supposed marginalization of white masculinities through multiculturalism and feminism. Her study on Finnish far-right intellectuals suggests that they present themselves as protecting the endangered "Western civilisation" from feminist and multiculturalist ideas which are seen to undermine it. The right-wing intellectual political project is to construct 'white border guard masculinities' who exercise their right to control borders of sexuality, gender identity, race and immigration (see Keskinen in this SI). This form of dominant identity politics portrays the future of the nation as threatened by demographic changes caused by immigration and the 'excessive' birthrates of migrants on one hand and the lack of white national women's reproductive activity on the other. This struggle about the nation's future is part of their exercise of 'governmental belonging' (Hage, 1998), that is the right to define the nation as a 'home'. The capacity to define the nation as their home, entails the definition of what can count as a proper family, which types and forms of families can legitimately claim belonging to the nation. The homely nation is formulated as a goal orientating 'the nationalist's practices (...) to help make true the integrity of the nation' (Hage, 1998: 42). Yet, rather than a concrete situation, the homely national family always figures as something lost through the influence of migration and gender equality politics. Claiming a right to manage the nation in such a way that it remains homely is an exercise in governmental belonging. Doty (2003), drawing on Deleuze and Guattari argues that the desire for social order reflects a 'paranoid' impulse of state craft: 'channeling, organizing, inscribing of desire is accomplished through a wide array of practices, which enable communication, create meanings, values, hierarchies, inclusions, and exclusions.' (p. 10). Indeed, the desire for social order expressed in the categorizing and control of those marked as immigrants, is one articulation of how institutionally, in policy but also in everyday life the state is manifested so that the categorizing and marginalization of racialized migrant families can be seen as an act of paranoid state craft, at the same time as claim to governmental

belonging.

Claiming governmental belonging can also draw on discourses of caring for the nation. One example for the centrality of the discourse of care to right-wing debates on nation and family has been shown by Mulinari and Neergaard's (2014) analysis of the Sweden Democrats. Like other populist movements, the Sweden Democrats claim to represent the true feelings of common people against socially engineered policies of gender equality. The party constructs the nation as based on similarity and solidarity, while families are seen as based on complementary gender roles. While male members' identification with the party is based on the idea of reclaiming a masculinity in charge of families and able to 'protect' their children through being citizens in work. This is reflected in the party's natalist policy aims to lower Swedish abortion rates to avoid the need for immigration to counteract population aging. As Per Björklund, member of the party executive, argues:

In Sweden, a woman gives birth to an average of 1.8 children. In order to maintain a stable population (without immigration), a required birth rate is slightly above 2. The low birth rate will lead to significant strains on pensions and healthcare. The politically correct want to solve this by mass immigration from countries with a high birth rate, that is, the Middle East and North Africa. As a Sweden Democrat I realize that such a policy will lead to a disastrous clash of cultures which will eventually break down our Sweden. Would it not be better pursuing a policy that lowers the abortion rate instead?(cited in Mulinari & Neergaard, 2014: 47).

This natalist policy is clearly linked with a desire to curb immigration and the birth rates of immigrants, to protect national identity. Female activists, in contrast construct a discourse of justifying racism through their care for the nation. They redefine good mothering as caring for their children by protecting them from migrants' supposed violence. While this care aims to create a better future for their children, it also addresses immigrants, who, it is argued, would be better off in their own countries. In this sense the exclusionary racist desire to expel immigrants becomes a sign of care.

In this section I have shown how contemporary European right-wing movements use discourses on nation, gender and family to construct the boundaries of the nation. While the supposedly European achievement of gender equality is often invoked to justify racisms, in particular against Muslims, gender differences are often emphasised, justifying gendered inequalities. Ideas about 'traditional' family forms are at the heart of struggles around gendered identities. These in turn are closely linked to natalist, racist ideas about who should and who should not reproduce. As Bonizzoni (forthcoming) points out, there is an emergent transnational discourse converging mainstream 'fears of hyper-fertile baby machines (Chavez, 2004, 2013) among (racial/ethnic, classed, religious) "others"' and fears that the existing demographic order will be challenged by 'an alleged Muslim plot to take over Europe through excessive reproduction resonating in right-wing nationalist parties' (Bonizzoni, 2017, no page number). Related to this, the language of care for the nation can be successfully mobilized to justify racist exclusions of migrants. These discourses, then centrally are about hegemonizing right-wing visions of how best to reproduce the nation.

Racialized migrant families in the UK

While the previous section looked at some key elements in contemporary right-wing discourses on nation, gender and family, in this section I will look more specifically at how these debates on gender, race, migration are articulated in the UK in particular focusing on the way in which racialized migrant families are positioned materially and symbolically as outsiders to the nation. This outsider status means that they are positioned as not deserving access to welfare and other resources of the nation-state to reproduce their families. The terminology I use here is 'racialized migrant families', which contains both descriptive and analytic elements. The families I am referring to here have

migration experiences. Especially the example on economic marginalization I explore below refers to families where some members are subject to immigration control. However, it is also important to acknowledge that experience of migration in itself does not necessarily mean social marginalization, in particular for wealthy migrants and those categorised as white, hailing from the global North. At the same time, Black and Minority Ethnic UK citizens who do not have personal migration experience but have lived and settled in the UK, at times for generations, also experience racism in the labour market, education, service provision and in symbolic and political representations (Erel, Karim, & Zaki, 2016). One of the pernicious effects of contemporary right wing discourse is that it activates the representation of ethnic minorities as recently arrived migrants (Khan & Weekes-Bernard, 2015). While this problematically denies the contributions, participation and belonging of all ethnic minorities, it is particular problematic for post-colonial Black and ethnic minorities as it contributes to the denial of colonial and post-colonial links, encouraging a historical amnesia of the brutalities and exploitation of colonialism and how these shaped global inequalities, including the wealth of contemporary Europe and the UK, underlying much of contemporary migration movements. Migrants thus are presented as if the countries they come from were disconnected from and not entitled to any of the welfare and wealth of European nation states (Bhambra, 2015; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2016; Gutiérrez Rodríguez et al., 2010; Wearing, 2017). This forgets that the wealth enabling welfare systems has been built on the exploitation of the global South, in particular the former colonies (Andrews, 2017).

This section draws on secondary material, to explore how the symbolic and economic marginalization and discrimination of racialized families are linked. Looking at discursive marginalization of racialized migrant families, I argue, that this forms a justification for the economic exclusion of racialized migrant families, in particular by excluding them from access to welfare. In a double move, then, these exclusions feedback to discourses on what counts as normative family life worthy of care and protection – racialized migrant families who are economically excluded because of their symbolic exclusion can at the same time serve as a symbol for families outside the norm, and hence outside the reach of the nationalized feeling of care for families. These racialized inequalities in the conditions for social reproduction are closely linked up with the normalisation of right-wing understandings of creating a homely nation, by caring for ethnic majority citizens and upholding gender ideals which both materially and symbolically exclude and subordinate racialized migrant families. Here, my focus will be in particular on how in the aftermath of austerity and an increasing climate of hostility towards migrants, Black and migrant families in the UK experience marginalization as outsiders to the nation. This takes up an earlier argument which points out overlaps, parallels and the ways in which discourses on gender, race, ethnicity and migration can coalesce across conservative, right-wing, far-right parties.

Historical context: The racialized migrant family in UK nation-building

Like many other European countries, the UK has increasingly policed the immigration of families, while also targeting migrant families through integration policies. The early 2000s saw an increasing focus on policing family related migration. This was ideologically constructed as part and parcel of a move from multiculturalism to the promotion of social cohesion and British values. This promotion of social cohesion and British values was in response to the international events of the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing war on terror on the one hand and on the other hand the racially inflected urban unrest in the North of England. The Cantle (2001) diagnosed the fact that white and Muslim communities lead separate lives as the cause of the urban unrest, arguing that greater social cohesion across ethnic communities was required. As the onus for such greater cohesion was put on the racialized ethnic minorities, family and intimate relations of friendship became a way in

which both migrants and also established ethnic minorities were incited to demonstrate their commitment to Britishness by foregrounding intimate relationships with local communities before any possible transnational unions to prove their love of the nation (Ahmed, 2004; Fortier, 2008). Thus, the family life of racialized migrants became a focus of policy in the areas of integration and social cohesion and migration policy. In particular, family formation and unification were targeted as spouses of UK residents (both with and without British citizenship) were subjected to increasingly onerous rules.

This builds on a long history of 'marriage restrictions' by British policy. Turner (2015) argues that current family migration rules have a legacy that goes back to the British state regulating relations between colonisers and colonized. Eugenicist discourses around such marriage restrictions were racialized and affected the construction of desirable and undesirable families in 19th century Britain as well as the colonies. These concerns around regulating racialized boundaries of family life were revived in response to post- World War II migration of racialized British citizens from the empire to the motherland. While this migration had been enabled by the 1948 Nationality Act and encouraged by labour recruitment drives, from the 1960s onwards successive legislation aimed to restrict the number of colonial (later post-colonial) subjects with a right to move to and settle in the UK. However, racist concerns about preventing men from the British colonies entering relationships with white British women shaped immigration policy, creating a 'limited preference for family unification' for female spouse migration from the British commonwealth to 'manage and foster the intimate site of the 'migrant family' (Turner, 2015: 632). Yet, in the late 1960s the migrant family was increasingly seen as problematic: 'fertile breeding ground for difference inside the 'pure' national space.' (ibid. 633). Family migration was cast as suspicious, and in particular female marriage migrants from South Asia, were expected to prove that their marriage was genuine. During the 1970s a deeply racist and sexist technique of so-called 'virginity tests' through gynaecological examinations when applying for visas or at the border were applied to South Asian applicants for marriage migration, drawing on colonial 'images of the chaste, virginal South Asian wife (Levine, 2006 cited in Turner, 2015: 633, cf. Bhabha, Klug, & Shutter, 1985, Smith & Marinella, 2011). In the 1980 regulations of that migrant spouses had to prove that the 'primary purpose' of their migration was marriage (rather than the marriage being a pretext for entering the UK, as was surmised), which discriminated in particular South Asian female marriage migrants. The 1971 Patriality Act limited the right of British Commonwealth migrants to enter the UK, allowing only those whose grandfather had been born in the UK, this was timed in a way that the vast majority of British subjects excluded from migrating and settling in the UK were Black and Asian, while the vast majority of those allowed to settle were white (Dummett, 1986). Here, again, family relations criteria in migration policy were used as a racial filter of migration management and reproducing the nation. This is reflected in the ways in which racialized families settled in the UK, whether citizens or not, were represented in education, family policy and social work during the post war period. A problem discourse prevailed, targeting 'Asian' families as having 'too much culture' on one hand and Caribbean families as having 'too little culture' (Alexander, 2002). While the supposedly tightly knit family structures of Asian families were lauded as beneficial for children's educational success, they were at the same time critiqued as too controlling and therefore obstacles to cultural integration (Rattansi, 1992). Some Caribbean families' forms of young motherhood and high percentages of single motherhood, on the other hand were pathologised, blamed for children's educational failure (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991; Reynolds, 2005). These ascriptions, of course, were themselves part of racializing everyday and institutional practices. However, the strategy of invoking the ways in which racialized families differed from a supposed white British norm, allowed to ignore structural racism's effects on families. Despite the increasing variety of all ethnic groups' family lives, this centred ideas of a 'normal family'.

In 1997 the incoming Labour government overturned the primary

purpose rule, introducing a family migration visa with linguistic and financial requirements. As marriage migrants 'were likely to settle, gain further rights of citizenship and raise children, the management of this route was understood as central to social order. (...) the 'migrant-spouse' was again viewed as a problem of 'integration' as they were marked by racial, cultural and linguistic difference' (Turner, 2015:634). Underlying this policy was the representation of the marriage migrant as female, oppressed by patriarchal family relationships, ill equipped to adapt to British values and lifestyle, outside of the labour market and therefore not 'integrated', since labour market participation was seen as a key measure of integration. Yet, such representations were reinforced by the exclusion of marriage migrants from many financial benefits and initially from the labour market. This was strengthened in 2002, when the two year probationary period on the family visa and a minimum age of 21 was introduced (Kofman, 2004). From 2010 onwards, there was furthermore a requirement to prove basic English (which was extended to intermediate English in 2012) and a test of knowledge of life in the UK. In 2012, furthermore, the family migration policy required that UK sponsors of partners from non-EEA countries had to prove a minimum income of £18,600 per annum (and additional income for each child), raised from the previous threshold of £5500 per annum, making it the country with the second highest minimum income threshold (Sirriyeh, 2015:233). Furthermore, foreign partners now have to wait for five years (rather than the previous two years) before they can apply for permanent settlement. The income based rules have been criticized for discriminating against female sponsors, the young and those living outside of London, as all of these groups are statistically likely to have lower wages (Children's Commissioner, 2015). The severity of these rules is illustrated by the fact that in 2012, 47% of the UK population would not have met the income threshold to sponsor a foreign spouse. Sirriyeh (2015) emphasizes that these new family migration rules differentiate between desirable and undesirable family migrants on the basis of class and income, which is often deeply entwined with ethnic and racial status as particular ethnic groups are concentrated in low income labour market sectors. Since 2012 this has affected families where one partner was allowed to live in the UK, but not the other, leading to the separation of families, affecting least 15,000 children. In a survey, the Children's Commissioner has found that families and in particular children suffer distress and anxiety as a result of separation from a parent. It should be noted that in this survey 79% of affected children are British citizens, which means that their rights to a family life are disregarded, as their families are both economically and symbolically as marginalized migrants. This reinforces the point raised above that the relationship between rights, racialization and migration is complex, as these children, despite their citizenship are not enabled to fulfil their rights to family life because at least one of their parents is a non-British migrant. In this way, current family migration policy painfully polices normative ideas on family life, in particular economic self sufficiency. In the following section I provide two in-depth examples of the ways in which since 2010, in austerity UK, the racialized migrant family has been subject to marginalization. The first example looks at symbolic marginalization, analysing a speech by David Cameron, while the second example shows the ways this has given rise to economic marginalization through the No Recourse to Public Funds Policy. By exploring one example of symbolic and one of economic marginalization, the article shows the circular and iterative connection of these realms: racialized migrant families who are economically excluded because of their symbolic exclusion can at the same time be used to symbolize what it means to be a family who is not 'normal' and 'comme il faut'.

Symbolic and Economic Marginalization of Racialized Migrant Families in Austerity UK

Feminist critics point out that the austerity measures since the Conservative- Liberal Democrat Coalition government in 2010 and the

Conservative government of 2014 have affected women disproportionately. The Women's Budget Group argues that '86% of savings in the period from 2010–2020 will have come from [women's pockets](#)' (2016: 3). Deep cuts to public services, which women rely on, have detrimental effects on women's living standards and on gender equality. In particular female-headed households 'will see the largest drop in living standards over the 2010–20 period due to policy changes with respect to tax, benefits and public services' with an average fall of 20% in living standards (2016a: 3). While current government policies foreground paid work and do not invest in a caring economy – be it unpaid care work or paid care work- the biggest growth in jobs has been in low paid and precarious work. Indeed, through an intersectional analysis, the Women's Budget Group shows that low income 'black and Asian women will lose around twice as much money as low income white men' by 2020 as a result of tax and benefit changes ([Women's Budget Group and Runnymede Trust, 2016](#)), as indeed low income women, in particular single mothers are hardest hit by current austerity policies.

Yet, it is important to acknowledge that for ethnic minority families, austerity policies do not signify the beginning, but a continuation of a squeeze on living standards, employment opportunities and access to quality jobs and services. As [Emejulu and Bassel \(2015\)](#) argue, the effects of racism have meant that even before austerity, ethnic minority groups have been disproportionately more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, regardless of their educational levels and were concentrated in low paid, insecure jobs. While cuts to public services affect all women, in particular minority women are disadvantaged as they were already in precarious situations. Furthermore minority women are 'more likely to be employed in the public sector (as teachers, nurses and social workers, etc.), more likely to be subcontracted to the state via private sector organisations (as care workers, cleaners, caterers, etc.) and are also more likely to be connected to the local state (through accessing public services) because of gendered caring responsibilities. Therefore, austerity measures clearly increase minority women's unemployment whilst simultaneously reducing the scope, coverage and access to public services' (2015: 88).

While reducing access to public resources for families, the governmental policies at the same time promote individual responsibility for good parenting, presenting a 'double bind' where parents are more vulnerable to austerity, while at the same time being held increasingly accountable for their children's social mobility as well as the economic and moral decline of the nation ([Jensen & Tyler, 2012](#)). Jensen and Tyler's analysis focuses on parents marginalized in terms of class. Ethnic minority and migrant parents are constructed differently: they are not simply cast as responsible for the moral decline of the nation, instead their moral and legal rights to belong are made conditional on their performance of 'good' parenting. Good parenting, then is often suggested as a precondition for full integration, however, racialized migrant families continue to be simultaneously targeted by exclusionary racism. This shows some aspects of the problematic character of discourses of integration, where particular conditions are posited for migrants, while at the same time it is often made impossible for migrants to actually meet these conditions, be it through the effects of structural or interpersonal racism. Therefore, it is more useful to think of integration not simply as a 'pathway' for migrants to become further engaged with their local context, but rather as a complex political and discursive strategy of governmentality. This strategy demarcates those marked as migrant and continuously, through institutional, political, legal and everyday repetition, reinstates these boundaries and separate identities of full citizen on one hand and migrant in need of integration on the other ([El-Tayeb, 2011](#)).

One example for this were the recurrent public debates initiated by then Prime Minister David Cameron since 2013 on whether EU migrants should be entitled to child benefits. Indeed, at one point, during the negotiations with EU before the referendum on Britain's EU membership, he put this relatively minor and inexpensive policy issue 'at the

heart of his plans to recast Britain's EU membership' (Kirkup, 2014). This meant rendering it legitimate to question the right of migrant workers who pay taxes, to access public resources for their families on a par with non-migrants.

In January 2016, David Cameron targeted the right to symbolic belonging of Muslim women, many of whom are British citizens. He furthermore conflated their position with that of migrants in an article he wrote in *The Times*, entitled: 'We won't let women be second-class citizens. Forcing all migrants to learn English and ending gender segregation will show we're serious about creating One Nation' (Cameron, 2017). He suggested that a large proportion of female migrants, Muslim women in particular, did not have the English language skills to engage with British values and culture. This, he argued was an important factor in their children's potential radicalization, disengagement from British life and involvement in terrorism. One problem with this argument is the conflation of settled ethnic minority citizens with new migrants. Such a conflation allows him to challenge the idea that migrants and racialized citizens can fully belong to the nation (Erel, Reynolds, & Kaptani, 2017). In this sense, the article portrayed Muslim women as potential threats to social and cultural cohesion of the nation, and more so, as potential educators of terrorists who endanger the safety of the nation.

While the question of numbers of migrant children is not explicitly problematized (as is the case in Sweden Democrats' or NPD's policies discussed above), the supposedly high birthrates of migrant mothers are regularly thematised in the press as an issue, as e.g. the *Daily Mail's* (2015) headline reporting on population statistics shows: 'Migrant baby boom means one in four infants now born in the UK has a mother who was born overseas and figure could reach one-in-three by 2021', the issue of future UK citizens being of migrant family background causes alarm. This is often elaborated as a concern over overpopulation of the UK as a small island, as for example McDonagh (2013) argues in a *Spectator* blog entitled 'Why doesn't David Attenborough blame Muslims for overpopulation'.

'In terms of British population growth, [...] one reason why the population is heading towards 70 million in 15 years is [...] that foreign born migrants are having quite large families (last year, nearly two in three London births were to couples where one or both of the parents was born abroad; in Britain as a whole, a quarter of births were attributable to mothers born outside the UK – dunno about fathers). And indeed in the bit of London I live in, the only big families I encounter are the children trooping behind mothers from – I think – Somalia. The middle classes round me are constrained by the most effective contraceptive known to humankind: the price of housing.

Here, we find again a mixing of the categories of migrant and Muslim as enemies within. The quote also implicitly challenges migrants' family forms by questioning the place of fathers within these families and finally emphasizes that racialized migrant families' reliance on welfare enables them to have a larger number of children than the middle class self reliant neoliberal (and implicitly white) responsible parents like herself.

Since the British referendum on membership in the EU in June 2016, when a slim majority voted to leave the EU, there has been a dramatic rise in racist and xenophobic attacks (The Independent, 2016) directed against those identified as migrants, both EU and non-EU citizens. The referendum result has enabled people to express their governmental belonging to the nation by challenging the right to be present in the UK of those they perceive as migrants. This has resulted in racist attacks, including a physical attack on a Muslim pregnant woman who lost her unborn child as a consequence of the beating (BBC, 2016) and the killing of a Polish man. Racist verbal abuse has become widespread, for example a Finnish mother who was overheard in the street speaking in Finnish with her children was told to 'Go home to Poland!' Indeed, similar verbal challenges, to the right of both migrants but also ethnic minority citizens of their right to be present in the UK have become an everyday occurrence (Weaver & Laville, 2016). While it was primarily

migration from the EU that played a central role in political debates, it should be noted that the subsequent rise in racist attacks was targeted both EU and non-EU migrants, as well as settled British citizens, including a rise in anti-Muslim attacks (Home Office, 2016; Institute of Race Relations, 2016). As Virdee and McGeever (2017) argue, in the campaign for Brexit and its aftermath far right and rightwing discourses worked through activating longstanding racisms and conflated all ethnic and racialized 'Others', not withstanding substantive differences in the ways European, non EU migrants and racialized citizens are socially positioned. It is against this backdrop that I want to focus on a particular example of economic marginalization where the social and cultural reproduction of migrants has been made almost impossible by recent government policies.

An increasing number of migrants to the UK have become subject to the 'No Recourse to Public Funding' policy which states that anyone who is subject to immigration control cannot access public funds according to Section 115 Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. This applies to a wide range of migrants, such as those whose permission to be in the UK is subject to a visa, including those joining spouses, visitors, workers, students and family members as well as asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and those who overstayed their visa or entered the UK without permission (Price & Spencer, 2015: 15). These migrants do not have access to welfare benefits including income-based job seeker's allowance, housing benefit, child benefit and tax credits.

While this applies to adult migrants, those who have children may under certain circumstances have access to support through local authorities on the basis of Section 17 of the Children's Act which puts a responsibility on local authorities to prevent all children (including migrant children) who live in their area from becoming destitute. While only a very small minority of migrant families become destitute, nevertheless this group is significant as it shows how the current hostile environment casts particular migrants as outsiders to the nation who do not deserve the resources to care for their children and themselves.

In a recent study Price and Spencer (2015) estimated that 3391 families and 5900 children received support through the Section 17 of the Children's Act by local authorities in 2012/13, 19% more than the previous year. This rapid growth is a consequence of increasingly strict migration legislation, as well as fewer employment opportunities and more stringent immigration requirements, as well as immigration checks on employers. While most of these families were overstayers (63%), others had papers to legally reside in the UK, the majority were Jamaican and Nigerian nationals with close links to the UK due to the history of colonialism and its effects on the citizenship regime. Almost a quarter (23%) of the families had at least one British child (Price & Spencer, 2015: 26). This shows that it is not simply a matter of drawing boundaries between those with a British passport and those without a British passport. By undermining the family lives of these children with British passports, the government policy demonstrates disregard for the welfare and well being of these children and their families. These British children, then, are constructed as less deserving of the welfare of the state and quality care of their families because they are racialized (cf. the situation of British children affected by the family migration rules who have been separated from a parent, Commissioner for Children, 2015).

Many of these families had been living in the UK for many years, having supported themselves by working formally or informally and had been part of the social fabric through their workplaces, their children's schools as well as faith based activities and volunteering. It is problematic to invoke the notion that these families have fulfilled the criteria of integration posited by the state, namely working, good parenting volunteering and participating in cross-ethnic networks, as this invocation can be used to legitimately exclude others who are constructed as 'less' integrated. However, the reason for pointing out that these families had fulfilled many of the criteria that policy explicitly posits as conditions for integration, is to show the extent to which the notion of integration is always constructed as just out of reach of

migrants. New conditions or tighter rules can be applied by the government which redraw the boundaries between those who have fulfilled and those who cannot fulfil the requirements for belonging. Furthermore, it is also important to note that criteria for measuring integration are not clear-cut, but instead both everyday, legal and institutional dynamics of constructing borders of who can claim to legitimately belong are movable and change in different political, historical and situational contexts. (Most recently we are experiencing how EU migrants in the UK are now again being constructed as outsiders, while they had to a large extent since the 1990s been legally and in everyday life regarded as 'well integrated'.) For many of these racialized migrant families, then, despite having been part of the social fabric through work, parenting and other activities, they were marked as not rightfully belonging when they encountered situations of crisis, such as ill health, the loss of a job, a relationship breakdown – often precipitated through domestic violence – and became unable to support themselves and their families. Initially many turned to networks of friends, family, faith or ethnic organizations for support (Price & Spencer, 2015). However, such support could be very ambiguous: heightened dependency also exposed the women to economic and sexual exploitation and posed risks to the children. Furthermore, such informal networks, whether exploitative or benign were only able to support the families for limited periods of time. When such arrangements came to an end, the women became destitute and homeless. Yet, accessing local authority support for their children was challenging as they had to go through various stages of assessment. Often, this assessment included encouragement to go back to their home countries, which the vast majority did not want to do. Furthermore, though this is not legal, parents routinely reported that they had been threatened that their children could be taken into care if they were unable to materially support them. If the assessment is favourable, families can get access to accommodation, and some financial support for the basics. However, often the accommodation is not suitable, as it could be in Bed and Breakfasts, often sharing bathrooms, toilets and cooking facilities with others, including sometimes drug users or other people by whom the family might feel intimidated. Many families report that accommodation poses a risk to their health, through being infested by vermin, humidity, mould and similar. The level of financial support provided varies greatly but forced families to 'survive on subsistence rates below those deemed minimal for any other category of people in the UK' (Price & Spencer, 2015: 58). In addition, families can also be sent to remote places by the local authorities they apply to for support, this could be small towns, where families feel extremely isolated and bereft of social support networks (Topping, 2015).

While for some families this is a short-term situation of up to six months, after which they find other solutions of support, more than a third of families have been in this extremely harsh situation for one to three years, and 7% even more than three years. The insecurity about the future leads to a feeling of limbo 'I can't go forward, I can't go back, it's no way to live for anybody' as one parent states (Price & Spencer, 2015:56).

The example of families affected by the No Recourse to Public Funding policy shows how migrants can be extremely marginalized from the social fabric, even where they had previously been able to fulfil the conditions imposed by the state to classify migrants as 'well integrated'. As the state denies these migrant families access to social rights, and creates a parallel, minimal, welfare provision for them, these families are constructed as outsiders to the nation. They are cast out from any but the most minimal responsibility of care. Thus, migrant parents, where they are subject to immigration control, are positioned in such a way to deny them the resources to care for themselves and their children in a dignified way.

This extreme form of marginalization centers the idea of a national community which does not owe care to migrants, even though migrants themselves form a key part of the workforce in care and social reproduction. These policies limiting migrants' access to social rights and

belonging furthermore make it impossible for families subject to immigration control to see themselves or be seen as a 'normal family' (Bourdieu, 1996). These families subject to migration control do not enjoy the privilege of being "comme il faut", in this sense, being cast out from the nation in material terms at the same time excludes these families from the symbolic representation of the nation, as they do not have the conditions to live or show the conditions of a 'normal family' life such as 'certain income, living space, etc.' (Bourdieu, 1996: 23). Such exclusion through governmental policies justifies and reinforces racist and sexist practices and discourses where those who identify themselves as rightfully belonging to the nation can then exercise governmental belonging to exclude migrants as well as those racialized bodies who are associated with migration, even if they legally hold citizenship.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that an analytic framework of social and cultural reproduction is helpful for understanding some key features of the contemporary confluence of right-wing politics of gender, ethnicity and race. By looking at the unequal conditions for social and cultural reproduction for racialized migrant families, the article has addressed racist discourses in contemporary right-wing Europe, in particular looking at the case of the UK. Theoretically, the article suggests that by linking cultural and social reproduction, we can analytically connect the gendered and racialized aspects of contemporary struggles around the nation. Feminists have clearly shown the political and analytical significance of the neoliberal crisis of social reproduction for capitalism. This article has contributed to that debate an analysis of how the racialized migrant family is becoming central to these debates in contemporary Europe. Such articulations of the link between gender and racist discourses can be highly contradictory: they may at once promote 'traditional' gender roles and simultaneously justify racism against ethnic minorities by claiming to embody European, 'progressive' egalitarian gender ideals. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that there is fluidity and overlap between the gendered and racialized discourses of far-right, right-wing and mainstream politics.

Right-wing discourses identify a threat to the nation by racialized migrant families. These discourses suggest that the nation needs to limit its capacity for care to white national families. The migrant family, instead is presented as a threat to the nation. I have reconstructed this debate with examples from Europe, where right-wing discourses are centred on questions about saving the future of the nation from overbearing feminist and multiculturalist institutions to re-center white hegemonic masculinities and femininities. The idea of caring for the nation is central to this. This is often expressed through the trope of the future of the nation in danger. By constructing migrant families as dangerously reproductive, these discourses claim the right and necessity for white nationals to exert governmental belonging to re-assert the nation as homely. The family thus becomes a key site for contestations about how to reproduce the nation. Moving from these insights to explore how hegemonic struggles around gender, race and nation articulate in the contemporary UK, the paper has suggested that symbolic and material marginalizations of racialized migrant families have become important ways in which governmental belonging has been articulated. Looking at discourses about Muslim, migrant and racialized parents' rights to claim legitimate belonging, the article has argued that these have become instrumental in legitimizing racist constructions of the homely nation. The example of migrant families that are subject to immigration control who have been pushed to the extreme margins of the welfare state has demonstrated how immigration and welfare policy interact to construct racialized migrant families as not entitled to the same care and welfare resources as national citizens. This has shown how in contemporary austerity UK, racialized migrant families are materially and symbolically constructed as outsiders to the nation without the right to be cared for within the nation,

nor the rights to care for their children in dignity.

These examples taken together show that an analytic lens of national, social and cultural reproduction is useful for exploring how in the contemporary moment of austerity in Europe right-wing politics of gender and race combine. Fantasies of a homely nation and postures of governmental belonging allow majority citizens to imagine themselves as managing the nation through the right to exclude. In an increasingly harsh, individualized socio-economic climate such exclusionary racism in the guise of care for the nation can provide symbolic capital to those who imagine themselves as central to the racial, ethnic and gendered identity of the nation. Such an understanding matters, not only as an intellectual project, but also to bring together social and political struggles against far-right, right-wing populist and conservative politics targeting gender equality, feminisms, multicultural policies and migrants' rights.

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